




Choices In Community Living, Inc.

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Ohio Senate

Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

Subcommittee Chairperson Hackett and Esteemed Committee Members,

I am Tom Weaver and writing to provide testimony on behalf of Choices In Community Living where I serve as the Executive Director. Choices serves over 405 people with developmental disabilities in eight counties in Southwest Ohio providing residential, transportation, and day programming supports and services. 96% of the 410 people employed by Choices are Direct Support Professionals providing the personalized and individual care needed.

I've been working to support individuals with developmental disabilities for over 40 years and the unprecedented investment in services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities made by Governor Dewine, Director Davis, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and the Ohio House of Representatives has my deepest and profound gratitude!

I am most appreciative of the administration's proposal to invest in the homemaker/personal care service to help increase the average wage of DSPs providing that service. I am even more appreciative for the commitment from your colleagues in the House to build off of the Dewine Administration's executive budget to further increase the average wage of a DSP providing the homemaker/personal care service.

The work of our Direct Support Professionals is at the core of helping a person have a good life. Rob and his brother Dan were both born with developmental disabilities. Dan's disabilities required him to have complete care to bath, dress, eat and be placed in his wheelchair every day while living in a developmental center. Rob, being able to move about and share his thoughts with others let his DSP staff know he had a dream; he wanted to get married to his lifelong friend, purchase a home and have his brother move in with him so they could be together. It was the dogged persistence and caring of his DSP staff over a period of several years that helped Rob move his dream to reality. He is married now, owns his home, his brother is living with him and he holds down a good job with the help of his team of DSPs. Now here is the kicker, over 40% of the DSP team doing this outstanding and creative work qualified for welfare benefits. This is the reason I am so excited about these increases as I know it will enable my agency to keep

these wonderful DSPs as they too need to pay their bills and continue to live their own dream of helping others.

The developmental disabilities services field is in agreement on the direction and actions to be taken to increase our support and positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their valued DSPs. What a compliment to the administration under Governor Dewine, self-advocates, parents, families, county boards, private providers and the Ohio House and Senate. On behalf of Choices In Community Living, my staff, and the individuals we support, I encourage you, Senator Hackett and Members of this Committee, to support the proposed budget provisions relevant to the Department of Developmental Disabilities. Together we will continue to build positive outcomes.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Weaver". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Tom Weaver

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